

Brain drain to brain gain

Mobilising the Welsh diaspora as agents
of economic change

Dr Sarah Louisa Birchley | Toyo Gakuen University, Tokyo, Japan
In collaboration with Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water and GlobalWelsh



Contents

Foreword	4-5
Introduction to the research	7
Executive summary	8
Section 1 Key strategic findings	9
Section 2 Demographic analysis of the Welsh diaspora	10-15
Section 3 The potential for investment and economic impact from the diaspora	16
Section 4 The dynamics of return migration	17
Section 5 Knowledge transfer and professional engagement	18-19
Section 6 Cultural and linguistic engagement	20-21
Section 7 Regional analysis and implementation framework	22-23
Section 8 Conclusions	24-25
Section 9 Strategic recommendations	26-27
Section 10 Implementation timeline	28-29
Section 11 Call to action	30
Next steps	31

Designed, edited and produced by Four Cymru (www.four.agency) from research conducted by Dr Sarah Louisa Birchley of Toyo Gakuen University, Tokyo supported by Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water and GlobalWelsh.

We used AI to help create this summary report from the original data and full academic research report. Humans then reviewed, edited, finalised and approved all copy.

Foreword



Wales stands at a critical juncture in its economic and social development. While much attention has focused on the continuing challenge of talent loss or ‘brain drain’, this extensive research reveals a more nuanced and ultimately more optimistic picture. Our findings suggest that Wales possesses an unprecedented opportunity to transform this historical challenge into a significant advantage for the nation’s future.

Our extensive research has uncovered a significant appetite for members of our diaspora to return to Wales and have a huge impact on the economy. They have also provided insights into the perception of Wales that can feed into a future narrative that could better position Wales on the world stage as a destination and place to invest.

There is an extraordinary level of passion and commitment from the diaspora to the future success and prosperity of Wales. They are overwhelmingly proud to be Welsh. They treasure and, indeed, are playing their part in keeping the Welsh language alive and vibrant and they represent a highly educated, very talented and successful cohort of ambassadors for Wales.

I hope this unprecedented (and long overdue) research can inform policy and action from stakeholders right across our wonderful country to turn a tide of decades-long brain drain into future brain gain and accelerating prosperity for all.

Walter May
CEO GlobalWelsh
November 2024



I am excited to present the findings of this large-scale study on the Welsh diaspora, an effort that represents an important milestone in understanding and engaging with Wales’s global community. This report is the first of many studies we aspire to undertake to explore the lives, contributions, and challenges of the Welsh diaspora and returnees comprehensively. Through these efforts, we aim to build a clearer picture of how Wales can better support and benefit from its global citizens.

The findings presented in this report provide the first empirical evidence to address the pressing issue of brain drain in Wales. Until now, discussions on this topic have been largely anecdotal, lacking the data-driven insights needed to guide effective policies. This study marks a significant step forward in starting to fill that gap.

Throughout this research, we have captured the voices of over 1,700 members of the Welsh diaspora, gathering insights into their experiences, professional paths, and connections to Wales. Their stories reveal not only a deep pride in their Welsh identity but also the barriers they face in maintaining or strengthening that connection. These barriers range from limited infrastructure and economic opportunities to a lack of global awareness about Wales as a distinct nation.

Importantly, this study is not only about challenges; it highlights opportunities for Wales to engage its diaspora in meaningful ways. The findings underscore the diaspora’s willingness to contribute to Wales—through business networks, cultural engagement, and professional expertise—if the right structures and support are in place. For example, a significant portion of respondents expressed interest in professional events linked to Wales, heritage tourism, and language training. This enthusiasm reflects a strong desire to stay connected to Wales, despite the geographical distance.

Our hope is that the evidence and insights from this report will lay the foundation for future policy development. By understanding the perspectives of the diaspora, we can create strategies not only to mitigate brain drain but also foster brain circulation—where Welsh talent abroad remains engaged with and contributes to the development of Wales. We envision a future where Wales is a global hub of talent, innovation, and cultural vibrancy, supported by a well-connected and thriving diaspora.

I want to express my profound gratitude to every participant who shared their stories and insights for this study. Your voices are vital in shaping a brighter future for Wales, and this report is dedicated to honouring your contributions. I also extend my thanks to the teams and organisations that supported this research, recognising the importance of evidence-based policymaking in driving positive change.

This is just the beginning of our journey to understand and engage with the Welsh diaspora. We are committed to continuing this work, building on the insights from this study, and deepening our connections with Welsh communities around the world. Together, we can ensure that Wales remains not just a place of great history and culture but a thriving and inclusive nation that embraces its global citizens.

Dr Sarah Louisa Birchley
Toyo Gakuen University, Tokyo and GlobalWelsh board member
November 2024



Introduction to the research

This study represents the most comprehensive investigation ever conducted into the modern Welsh diaspora. With an estimated 3-4 million Welsh people living outside Wales—equivalent to the country’s resident population—understanding and engaging this global community has become increasingly crucial for Wales’s future development.

The research addresses several critical questions:

- What is the composition and distribution of the Welsh diaspora?
- What motivates Welsh people to leave and what might bring them back?
- How can Wales better engage with its global talent network?
- What barriers exist to diaspora engagement and investment?
- How can Wales transform ‘brain drain’ into ‘brain gain’?

Defining the diaspora

Following the International Organization for Migration (IOM) framework, this study defines the Welsh diaspora as: “Individuals and members of networks, associations and communities who have left Wales but maintain links with their homeland. This includes settled expatriate communities, temporary migrant workers, expatriates with host country nationality, dual nationals, and second/third-generation migrants.”

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a mixed-methods approach combining:

- Quantitative analysis of 1,709 survey responses
- Qualitative insights from 20 in-depth interviews
- Stakeholder consultation with 40+ Welsh organisations

Data collection

64-question survey, based on the IOM Diaspora Mapping Toolkit, via:

- GlobalWelsh communication channels
- Targeted email campaigns
- Social media networks
- Welsh associations worldwide

Participant Profile

Survey respondents represented:

- 45 countries across six continents
- All age groups (predominantly 25-64)
- Diverse professional sectors
- Various durations of time outside Wales

Interview cohort included:

- Four female and 16 male participants
- Representatives from major global markets
- Multiple industry sectors
- Welsh speakers and non-Welsh speakers

Executive summary

The research findings are overwhelmingly positive and reveal three transformative opportunities for Wales:

1 A dynamic entrepreneurial network

The study uncovered an unprecedented level of entrepreneurial activity within the Welsh diaspora:

- Nearly 500 businesses worldwide run by Welsh entrepreneurs (within the 1709 respondents)
- Diaspora operating across technology, finance, healthcare, creative industries, renewables, space, MedTech, FinTech, advanced manufacturing and AI
- Over 300 diaspora respondents already contributing to Welsh initiatives (c.20%)
- Strong appetite for business expansion and investment in Wales

2 Highly educated global talent pool

The Welsh diaspora represents a significant skilled workforce – far above the average:

Highly educated and skilled

- 45% hold master's degrees or higher
- 62% willing to engage in knowledge transfer back to Wales

In key growth sectors

- Technology (24%)
- Creative Industries (7%)
- Healthcare (6%)
- Finance (6%)
- Engineering and manufacturing (6%)

3 Strong cultural ambassadors

The research reveals powerful emotional connections to Wales:

- 92% proud to be Welsh
- Almost 10% maintain Welsh language use abroad
- Strong regional loyalties creating opportunities for targeted engagement
- 56% interested in participating in Welsh cultural events globally

“I built my company from scratch in California, now valued at \$200m. I'd love to create an R&D hub in Wales, but we need better infrastructure and support systems to make it viable.”

Silicon Valley Tech Leader

Key strategic findings

Three highly actionable, specific strategic imperatives emerge from the research which can inform policy makers and stakeholders right across Wales as they develop their work in coming years.

1 Return potential

There is significant interest from highly skilled diaspora in returning to Wales:

- 54% of recent emigrants would consider returning
- Primary motivators would be family connections, career opportunities
- Key barriers are economic conditions, social services, housing

2 Investment interest

There is a highly level of potential to generate business investment in Wales

- 25% likely to invest in Wales within 12 months
- Main barriers are knowledge gaps related to relocation funding opportunities, the Welsh entrepreneurial ecosystem, and availability of local talent
- Strong interest in mentorship and knowledge transfer back to Wales

3 Regional engagement

Beyond a pan-Wales impact there are significant opportunities for the regions of Wales

- Strong emotional connections to specific regions
- Opportunities for targeted regional development
- Potential for local diaspora investment initiatives

Critical success factors

To capitalise on these opportunities, the research indicate that Wales must address:

- 1 Infrastructure and connectivity
- 2 Economic conditions and opportunities
- 3 Investment frameworks and support
- 4 Public service quality
- 5 Housing accessibility
- 6 Cultural engagement pathways

“We need clear pathways for investment and engagement. Many of us want to contribute but find the current system opaque.”

Tech CEO, San Francisco

Demographic analysis of the Welsh diaspora

Gender

Sixty-six percent of 1,709 respondents self-identified as male, 32% as female, 2% non-binary. When asked how they would describe their race or ethnicity, 1,644 respondents stated White/Caucasian, nine respondents cited Black, 21, Asian. Of the 1,490 who responded to a question about sexuality, 85% stated they were straight, 4% gay, and 2% bisexual.

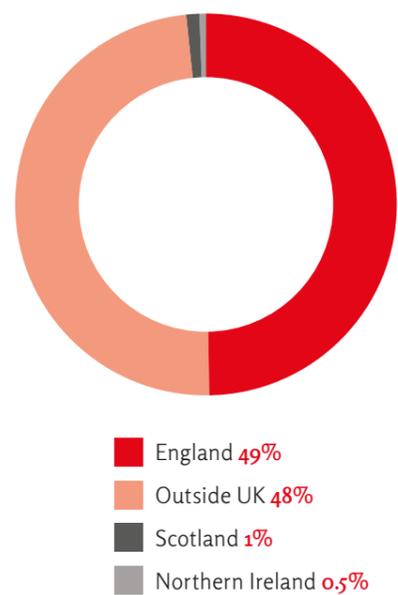
Age

Of the 1,709 respondents 3% are aged 18-24, 24% are 25-34, 21% are 35-44, 22% are 45-54, 20% are 55-64, 6% are 65-74 and 1% are over 75.

Geographic Spread

The research identified Welsh diaspora communities across 45 countries, with significant concentrations in:

Primary locations (% of respondents)



Key International Concentrations

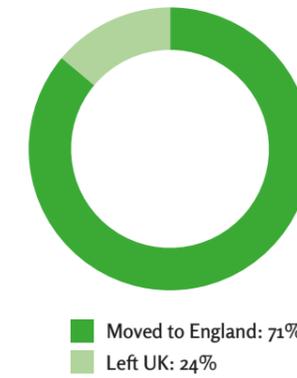
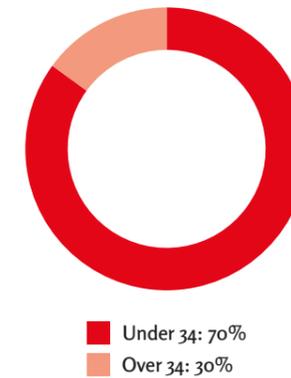
- United States (171 respondents)**
 - Major clusters in California, New York, Texas
 - Strong technology and financial sector representation
- Australia (112 respondents)**
 - Significant presence in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth
 - Diverse sector engagement including education and mining
- European Union**
 - Germany **44 respondents**
 - France **40 respondents**
 - Netherlands **21 respondents**
 - Growing technology and research communities
- Asia-Pacific**
 - Japan **20 respondents**
 - China **18 respondents**
 - Singapore **11 respondents**
 - Emerging fintech and education sector presence

Migration timelines

The study revealed distinct patterns in emigration waves:

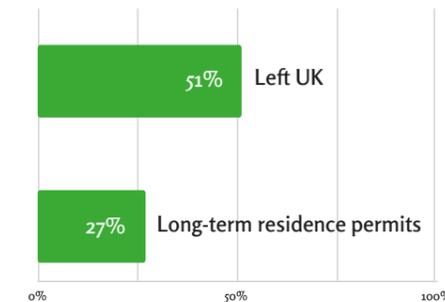
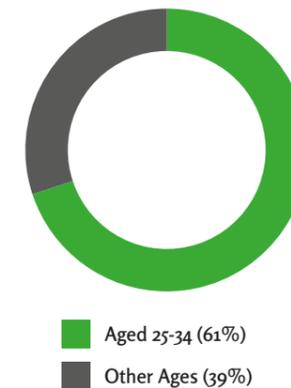
Recent emigrants 2021-2024

- 70% under age 34
- 71% moved to England
- 24% left UK entirely
- 42% moved outside UK
- 21% gained permanent residency abroad



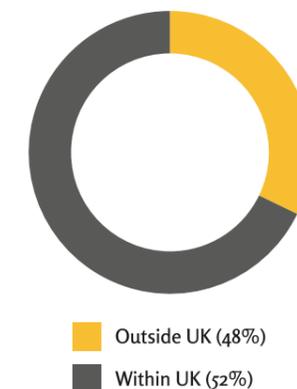
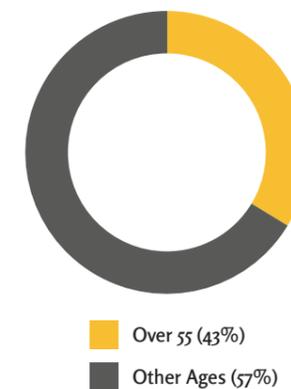
Mid-term emigrants 2016-2020

- 61% aged 25-34
- 51% left UK
- 27% secured long-term residence permits
- Strong professional sector representation



Long-term emigrants pre-2009

- 43% over age 55
- 48% outside UK
- Higher business ownership rates
- Established professional networks



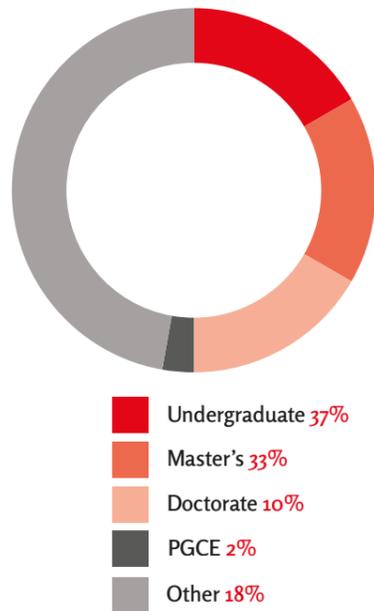
Section 2

Educational profile

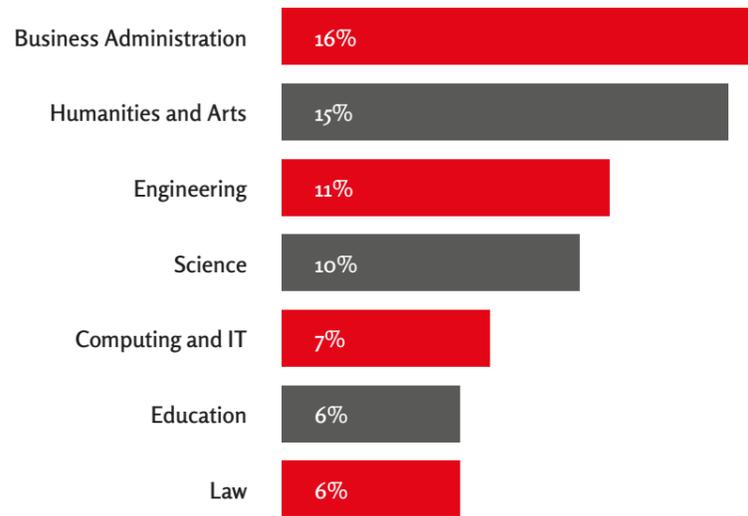
Academic Qualifications

The Welsh diaspora demonstrates exceptionally high educational attainment:

Degree distribution N=1,667



Fields of study



Regional variations in education analysis shows interesting patterns in educational distribution:

Cardiff region

34% Master's degrees

Strong representation in business and technology

Swansea region

13% Undergraduate

Higher proportion in engineering and sciences

North Wales

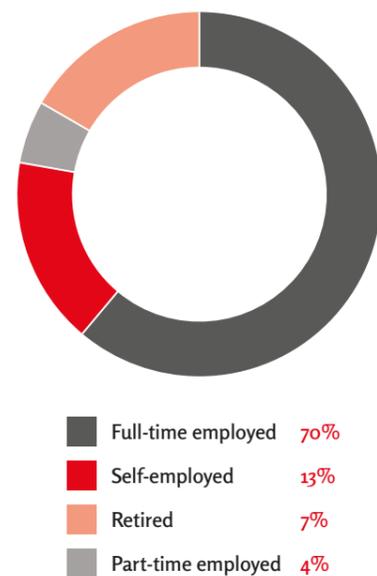
6% PhDs

Strong representation in research and academia

Professional profile

Employment Status

Current employment status among respondents N=1,709



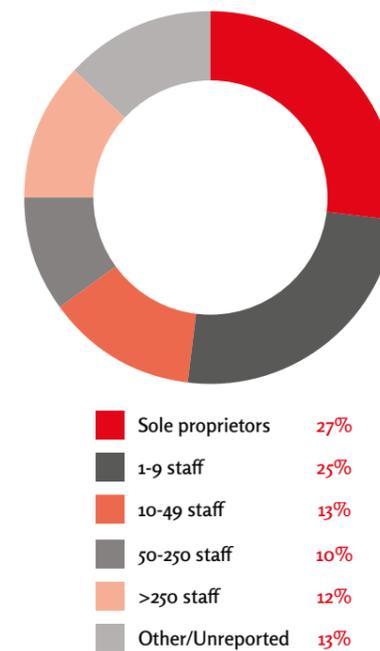
Sector distribution

Primary employment sectors

Sector	Percentage	Specialisations
Technology	24%	• Software development • AI/ML specialization • Digital transformation
Creative Industries	7%	• Media production • Design • Digital content
Healthcare	6%	• Medical professionals • Health technology • Research
Finance	6%	• Investment banking • FinTech • Wealth management
Engineering and manufacturing	6%	• Aerospace • Automotive • Sustainable technologies

Entrepreneurial activity

The study identified 437 business owners/managers:



Notable business types

-  Technology startups
-  Consulting firms
-  Healthcare innovations
-  Creative agencies
-  Manufacturing enterprises

Section 2

Family and cultural connections

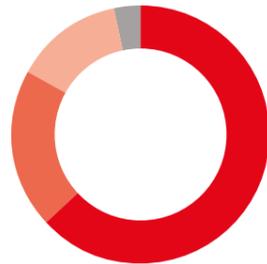
Family status



- Married 56%
- Cohabiting/domestic partnership 19%
- Single 15%
- Divorced 4%
- Widowed 1%

Cultural engagement

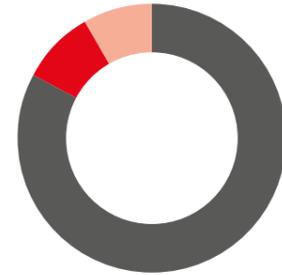
Pride and identity



- Extremely proud to be Welsh 60%
- Very proud 19%
- Proud 13%
- Not very proud 3%

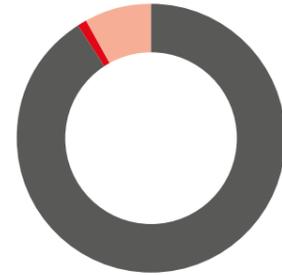
Language use

Home language



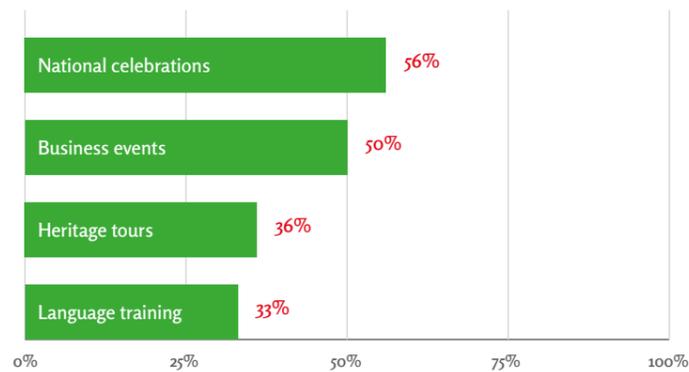
- English 82%
- Welsh 9%
- Other languages 8%

Professional language use



- English in workplace 91%
- Welsh in workplace 0.7%
- Other languages 7%

Cultural activity participation



“There is tremendous power and potential in this data – and we are keen to share and develop it with partners right across Wales. The scope for investment, economic contribution and cultural connection is huge. Let’s act on it together.

Nan Williams, Chair, GlobalWelsh

Regional affiliations

The study revealed strong regional loyalties, particularly to:

Region	Respondents	Demographic
Cardiff capital region	1,097	47% aged 25-44 41% willing to return
Swansea Bay region	449	46% aged 24-44 Strong academic ties
North Wales	317	Higher proportion of business owners Strong cultural ties
Mid Wales	178	Higher proportion of retirees Strong agricultural connections

Emerging trends from the demographic data

Analysis of this research data reveals several significant patterns:

1 Technology sector dominance

The Welsh diaspora have a very strong presence and level of success in technology. This is clearly significant for the future success of any industrial strategy for Wales and bodes well for the ability of Wales to participate in future tech industries if the diaspora can be accessed and engaged.

- Growing concentration in global tech hubs
- Strong startup presence
- Digital innovation focus

2 Educational Excellence

The old adage “brain drain” appears to be literally that – the Welsh overseas appear very highly educated indeed and have a strong commitment to ongoing learning and skills development. This is a major opportunity if Wales can tap into this resource more effectively.

- Higher than average postgraduate qualifications
- Strong STEM representation
- Continuous professional development

3 Entrepreneurial spirit

We know that historically the Welsh created the world’s first mail order business, founded major US banks and have run some of the most significant investment funds in the world. Today’s diaspora appear no less active and have very high levels of entrepreneurial skill and activity.

- High business ownership rates
- Global market presence
- Innovation focus

4 Identity, culture and pride

A dynamo of soft power. Not to be underestimated, the sense of cultural pride in Wales, its language and institutions and organisations is a valuable lever for Welsh policy makers, businesses and other stakeholders. These are important motivational factors for the diaspora and represent a potential dynamo of soft power across the world if it could be mobilised.

- Strong Welsh language skills
- Active cultural participation
- Multi-generational engagement

These demographic patterns suggest significant opportunities for Wales to engage with its diaspora through targeted programmes and initiatives, which will be explored in subsequent sections of this report.

The potential for investment and economic impact from the diaspora

The entrepreneurial landscape

A key finding from the research is the very high level of entrepreneurial activity within the Welsh diaspora. More than a quarter of respondents (437/25.6%) identified as business owners/managers. Within that there are 110 female business owners. However, only three per cent currently maintain Welsh operations; with 109 actively seeking Welsh business opportunities at the moment.

This combination of results clearly presents a significant opportunity for economic development in Wales.

Sector distribution of diaspora businesses

Technology and innovation

- AI / ML companies
- SaaS providers
- Digital transformation consultancies

Professional services

- Management consulting
- Financial services
- Legal practices

Healthcare and life sciences

- Biotech startups
- Medical technology
- Healthcare services

When business owners were asked about their interest in investing:

- 25% were likely to invest in Wales within 12 months
- There is strong interest in tech and renewable sectors

The barriers to investment

Potential investors identified three main obstacles as barriers to investment:

1 Knowledge gaps 13%

- Limited awareness of opportunities
- Unclear regulatory environment
- Poor information accessibility

2 Management challenges 12%

- Remote operation difficulties
- Talent acquisition concerns
- Infrastructure limitations

3 Government support 9%

- Complex regulatory frameworks
- Limited incentive programs
- Administrative burdens

“I'd love to bring my family and business back to Wales, but we need assurance about healthcare, schools, and professional opportunities for my spouse.”

Tech Entrepreneur, Sydney

The dynamics of return migration

The survey analysed the potential for return migration and the results show varying patterns across different emigrant groups. The results are classified below by date of emigration from Wales:

Recent emigrants 2021-2024

- 54% would consider return
- Primary drivers:
Family 50%
Career 47%
- Strong interest in entrepreneurial opportunities

Established emigrants 2016-2020

- 49% open to return
- Focus on lifestyle factors
- Higher investment potential

Long-term emigrants pre-2009

- 40% consider return
- Retirement planning focus
- Strong philanthropic interest

The barriers to returning

Economic, social and personal considerations are all potential barriers to returning expressed by significant proportions of diaspora respondents. The most significant of these relate to economic conditions, housing, the quality of healthcare and educational standards:

Economic factors

- Overall economic conditions 54%
- Employment opportunities 41%
- Housing accessibility 18%

Social Infrastructure

- Healthcare quality 47%
- Education standards 47%
- Public services 24%

Personal considerations

- Family integration 24%
- Partner employment 24%
- Cultural readjustment 15%

“If Cardiff Airport had more regular connections to useful cities, I might live a hybrid life. I would consider commuting two days a week to Spain. If it was reliable I might also consider splitting my business between Cardiff and Spain instead of London (and setting up my headquarters there) but it's too much of a risk as the connections are so poor.”

Business owner, London/Spain

Knowledge transfer and professional engagement

The huge potential to unlock mentorship

The survey shows very strong potential to unlock mentoring from Welsh diaspora back into Wales to facilitate knowledge sharing, personal development and knowledge sharing with the purpose of accelerating success.

62% are willing to mentor Welsh professionals.

56% are interested in industry partnerships.

44% are open to academic collaboration.

Target areas for mentorship are:

Professional development

- Career guidance
- Industry insights
- Global networking

Business development

- Startup mentoring
- Market entry strategies
- International expansion

Academic collaboration

- Research partnerships
- Guest lecturing
- Curriculum development

Skills and Knowledge Exchange

The priority sectors in which respondents were able and prepared to offer skills and knowledge exchange are:

- Technology and digital transformation
- Sustainable energy
- Healthcare innovation
- Creative industries
- Financial services

Diaspora identified a variety of mechanisms through which such skills and knowledge exchange could be facilitated including:

- Virtual mentoring programs
- Short-term assignments
- Industry partnerships
- Academic exchanges

“I believe that there are many Welsh diaspora like me who have a great deal to offer to support Education. I am currently working in education on various programmes, both in the U.K. and internationally and would be passionate about supporting Wales with their education vision in the future.”

Master’s educated business owner, England

Cultural and linguistic engagement

Welsh language dynamics

The current usage of the Welsh language amongst the diaspora is striking. More than nine per cent of the diaspora maintain Welsh at home with a full 20 per cent interested in teaching their children Welsh. One per cent use Welsh professionally. Given the distances from Cymru and the absence of day-to-day language infrastructure, opportunity and governance, this compares very favourably to the 17.8 per cent of Welsh speakers within Wales (2021) according to the Welsh Language Commissioner (please note this latter figure includes children whereas the Diaspora survey was completed only by adult respondents).

Diaspora members identified a range of language development needs:

Digital learning resources

- Online platforms
- Mobile applications
- Virtual classrooms

Cultural integration

- Media content
- Literature access
- Cultural events

Professional development

- Business Welsh
- Technical terminology
- Industry-specific content

Cultural connection

Diaspora respondents identified their **top four preferences for maintaining cultural connection** with Wales as:

Cultural events 56%

Professional networking 50%

Heritage tourism 36%

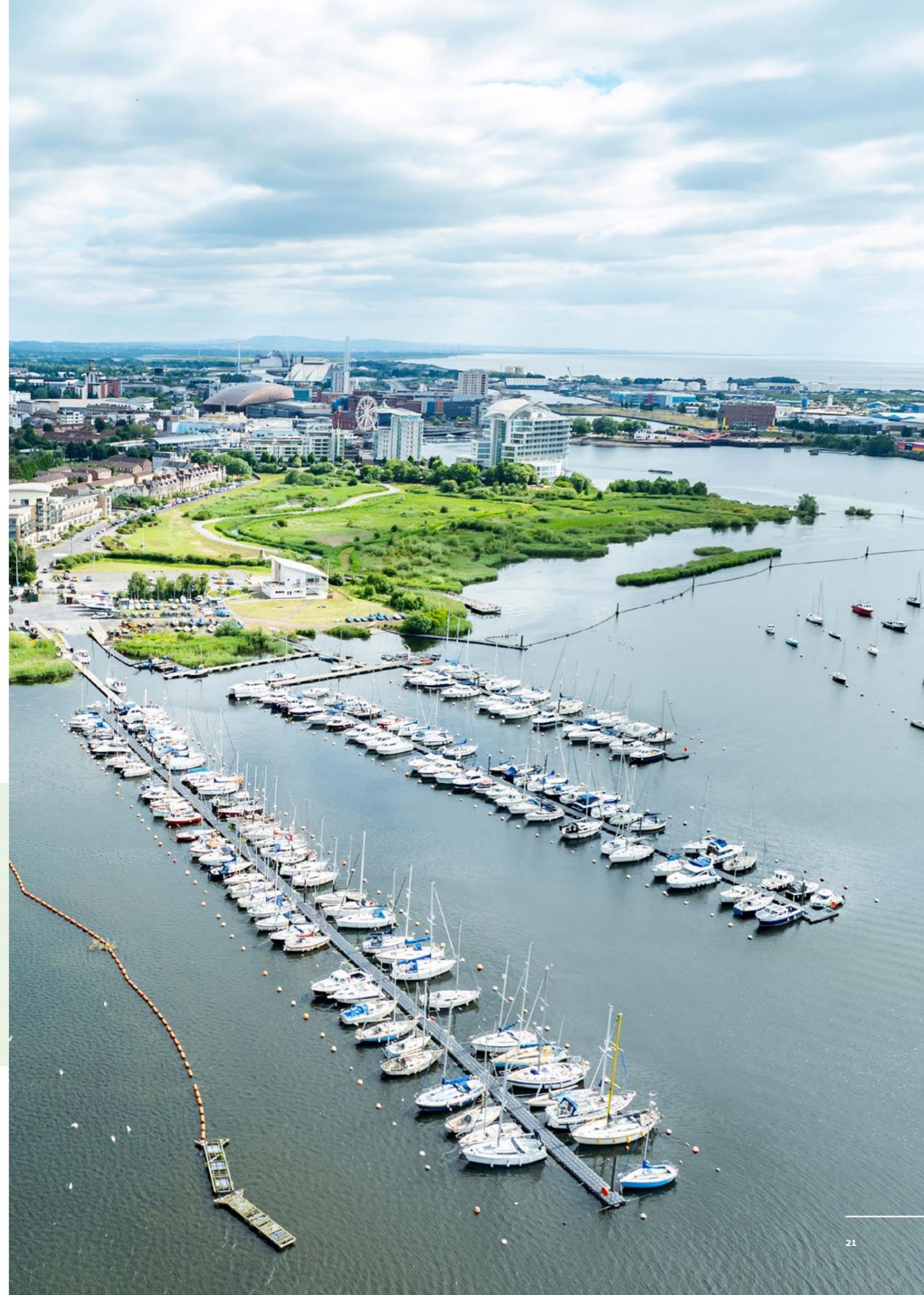
Language programmes 33%

The ways which diaspora identify with Wales are expressed in a range of ways, but primarily through interest in:

- Sport and recreation
- Arts and music
- History and heritage
- Contemporary culture

“I am raising my child as Welsh, with Welsh as her mother tongue and a sense of identity and belonging to Wales but will always find it challenging that I have essentially been priced out of providing a life for her in my home country due to second homes and tourism, and high financial thresholds for the extremely low number of affordable houses available.”

Finance professional, Germany



Regional analysis and implementation framework

The survey analysed the regional ecosystem across Wales and how diaspora connected with particular regions. The highlights are organised by region below:

CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION CITY DEAL		
Demographics 1,097 respondents	Education Profile	Professional Profile
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 47% aged 25-44 • 53% located outside UK • 41% willing to return to Wales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 37% undergraduate degrees • 36% master's degrees • 8% doctorate level 	Strong representation in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology • Professional services • Financial services • Creative industries
SWANSEA BAY CITY DEAL		
Demographics 449 respondents	Education Profile	Professional Profile
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 46% aged 24-44 • 46% outside UK • 41% considering return 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 41% undergraduate degrees • 32% master's degrees • 9% doctorate level 	Strong representation in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manufacturing innovation • Digital economy • Education sector • 23% business owners/managers
NORTH WALES GROWTH DEAL		
Demographics 317 respondents	Education Profile	Professional Profile
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 49% aged 24-44 • 43% outside UK • 50% considering return 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 34% undergraduate degrees • 32% master's degrees • 10% doctorate level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher proportion of entrepreneurs (24%) • Strong engineering presence • Significant STEM expertise • Energy and environment; tourism and hospitality; digital innovation (rural connectivity)
MID WALES GROWTH DEAL		
Demographics 178 respondents	Education Profile	Professional Profile
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 47% aged 24-44 • 44% outside UK • 48% considering return 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 41% undergraduate degrees • 37% master's degrees • 10% doctorate level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24% business ownership • Rural enterprise • Sustainable development • Cultural tourism

Implementation Frameworks

There are three strategic priorities for regional development to attract diaspora which arise from the research. These are:

Infrastructure development	Business support	Talent Integration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital connectivity • Transport links • Business facilities • Housing stock 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment facilitation • Regulatory guidance • Market entry support • Professional networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills matching • Professional development • Family support services • Cultural integration

“Cardiff’s tech scene has evolved significantly. With the right infrastructure and support, it could rival cities like Manchester or Dublin.”

FinTech Executive, London

Regional action plans

The report points to the need to develop / evolve further regional action plans over the short, medium and longer term. An outline of these phases and the focus of each is below followed by suggestions for associated key performance indicators and monitoring parameters.

Short-term actions 0-12 months

4 Digital platform development

- Opportunity mapping
- Network building
- Resource sharing

5 Support service establishment

- Investment advisory
- Business mentoring
- Family relocation

6 Network activation

- Professional groups
- Industry clusters
- Cultural associations

Medium-term actions 1 - 3 years

1 Infrastructure development

- Digital connectivity
- Transport links
- Business facilities

2 Program implementation

- Mentorship schemes
- Investment facilitation
- Skills development

3 Ecosystem building

- Innovation hubs
- Research networks
- Industry partnerships

Long-term actions 3 - 5 years

7 Economic Transformation

- Sector development
- Innovation ecosystems
- Global connectivity

8 Social Infrastructure

- Education excellence
- Healthcare quality
- Cultural facilities

9 Sustainable Growth

- Environmental leadership
- Social inclusion
- Economic resilience

Key performance indicators

- Economic Impact
- Social Development including
 - Return migration
 - Skills acquisition
 - Community engagement
- Infrastructure Progress

Success metrics

- Investment volume
- Business creation
- Employment growth
- Skills development
- Infrastructure improvement
- Community engagement

Conclusions

Key research insights

This groundbreaking study reveals the Welsh diaspora as a powerful, untapped resource for national development. Three critical findings emerge:

- 1 Economic potential**

The research uncovered unprecedented entrepreneurial and investment capacity:

 - Nearly 500 Welsh-led businesses globally
 - 25% of diaspora ready to invest in Wales
 - Strong presence in high-growth sectors
 - Significant knowledge transfer potential
- 2 Professional excellence**

The diaspora represents an exceptional talent pool:

 - 45% hold advanced degrees
 - Leadership positions in key growth sectors
 - Strong innovation and entrepreneurial mindset
 - Global network connections
- 3 Cultural connection**

Strong emotional and cultural ties create lasting bonds:

 - 92% express pride in Welsh identity
 - Active Welsh language use abroad
 - Powerful regional loyalties
 - Desire for deeper engagement

“This is our moment to reimagine Wales's relationship with its global citizens. Through collaborative action and strategic investment, we can create a new model for how small nations leverage their diaspora for economic and social development.”

Senior Policy Advisor, Welsh Government

Strategic recommendations

1 Establish a national diaspora framework

Priority actions

- Create a cross-sector diaspora task force
- Develop comprehensive engagement strategy
- Establish clear metrics and accountability
- Align public and private sector initiatives

Implementation timeline

- Immediate: Task force formation
- 6 months: Strategy development
- 12 months: Full programme launch
- 24 months: Impact assessment

2 Build investment infrastructure

Key components

- Diaspora investment portal
- Advisory support services
- Regulatory fast-track options
- Regional development funds

3 Enhance return migration support

Critical elements

- Family integration services
- Professional networking support
- Housing assistance
- Education guidance
- Healthcare navigation

4 Strengthen regional development

Focus areas

- **Cardiff Capital Region:** Technology and financial services
- **Swansea Bay:** Manufacturing and education
- **North Wales:** Energy and tourism
- **Mid Wales:** Rural enterprise and sustainability

5 Improve digital infrastructure

Priority Developments

- High-speed connectivity
- Remote working hubs
- Digital business platforms
- Virtual collaboration tools

6 Create Cultural Connection Programmes

Key Initiatives

- Welsh language resources
- Cultural exchange programs
- Heritage tourism
- Professional networks
- Regional ambassadors

“There’s a hunger among Welsh entrepreneurs abroad to contribute back home. We just need the right frameworks and support systems to make it happen.”

Walter May, CEO GlobalWelsh



Implementation timeline

Immediate actions

0-6 months

- 1 Establish diaspora task force
- 2 Launch digital engagement platform
- 3 Create regional advisory groups
- 4 Develop investment framework

Short-term Goals

6-18 months

- 1 Launch investment portal
- 2 Implement support services
- 3 Create regional programs
- 4 Establish monitoring systems

Medium-term objectives

18-36 months

- 1 Scale successful programmes
- 2 Expand infrastructure
- 3 Deepen engagement
- 4 Measure impact

"I feel a sense of guilt for not living in Wales even though I speak and promote Welsh in work and social circles and travel back home often. I will move back home when I'm older, but just for now I need to accept that I have to save up to buy a house by climbing the corporate ladder in England as that is where the jobs are - once I've done that I'll be back and would love to start my own small business to support local communities."

Young professional, Bristol

Call to action

The success of this initiative requires coordinated action from multiple stakeholders:



Government

- Policy framework development
- Infrastructure investment
- Regulatory support
- Public service enhancement



Business community

- Investment opportunities
- Mentorship programmes
- Professional networks
- Knowledge transfer



Educational institutions

- Research collaboration
- Skills development
- Cultural programmes
- Alumni engagement



Cultural and sporting organisations

- Heritage programmes
- Language resources
- Community building
- Cultural exchange

Future outlook

Wales stands at a pivotal moment.

This research clearly demonstrates that the Welsh diaspora represents not just a community of global Welsh citizens, but a powerful force for national development. By implementing these recommendations and creating structured pathways for engagement, Wales can transform its historical 'brain drain' into a modern 'brain gain'.

Together, we can build a stronger, more prosperous Wales by engaging our global Welsh community in meaningful and impactful ways.

Next steps

GlobalWelsh invites all stakeholders to:

- 1 Review these findings
- 2 Engage in strategic planning
- 3 Commit to collaborative action
- 4 Join the implementation task force

Contact GlobalWelsh to:

- Access the full, detailed research data (this is a paid for report) or commission bespoke further analysis into specific topic areas on a consultancy basis.
- Join implementation teams
- Contribute to strategic planning
- Partner in programme development
- Contact us at hi@globalwelsh.com



GLOBAL WELSH

Join the community
via GlobalWelsh Connect:



For additional information or to get
involved, please contact GlobalWelsh
at hi@globalwelsh.com

www.globalwelsh.com

Designed, edited and produced by Four Cymru (www.four.agency)
from research conducted by Dr Sarah Louisa Birchley of Toyo
Gakuen University, Tokyo supported by Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water
and GlobalWelsh.

We used AI to help create this summary report from the original data and full academic
research report. Humans then reviewed, edited, finalised and approved all copy.